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Proudly Representing Pennsylvania's 15th District



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Congressman Dent expresses disappointment with stem-cell veto, will vote to override President

WASHINGTON — U.S. Rep. Charlie Dent (PA-15) today joined 26 other Republicans in Congress who will fight to protect legislation that opens the door for federal funding of additional embryonic stem cell lines. Congressman Dent reaffirmed his pledge to vote to override a presidential veto of the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act.

In 2005, Congressman Dent voted for the House's Castle/DeGette bill, legislation that would lift the current restriction on federally-funded stem cell research and establish ethical requirements for stem cells that are eligible for federally funded research. The Senate passed the bill Tuesday.

President Bush vetoed the bill today. In a letter authored by U.S. Rep. Michael Castle (R-DE) and released Wednesday morning, 27 Republican Members of Congress urged the President to reconsider, and promised that his veto will face an override vote. (See attached letter)

"I believe the President may be sincere in his opposition to this bill, but I believe he was poorly advised in vetoing it," Congressman Dent said. "Both houses of Congress have voted to advance this vital research, and we have taken great measure to set firm ethical guidelines for it."

The bill's ethical requirements are extensive. First, in order to be considered for this research, the donated cells must have come from *in vitro* fertilization clinics and must be in excess of those needed for that facility's

fertility treatment function. Second, the *in vitro* facility must certify that these cells would be otherwise discarded if not donated and must further indicate that there is no chance that these cells could be implanted. Third, the donors of these cells must sign a written consent form allowing such a donation and must affirm that they have not received any inducements, financial or otherwise, to make the donation.

“Stem cell research is an important key toward curing some of the most vexing diseases of our time, like Parkinson’s disease, juvenile diabetes, cancer, and spinal cord injuries,” Congressman Dent said. “The importance of federal support is not just about dollars. It would help academic researchers in America retain our global pre-eminence in medical research. Most importantly, it provides hope to millions of people around the world.”

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